



MRC MINUTE

Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 1 August 1, 2007

Philadelphia Department of Public Health
500 S Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146

Carmen I. Paris, M.P.H.
Health Commissioner

Joseph C. Cronauer
Executive Deputy

Caroline C. Johnson, M.D.
Director, Division of Disease Control

Letter from the MRC Coordinator

Dear Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the "MRC Minute," a quarterly newsletter for the Philadelphia MRC community. We see this newsletter as a way to improve your awareness and understanding of the MRC, share preparedness tips and lessons learned, and provide information about local resources and training events. In the months ahead, we hope to be your source for all things MRC. We encourage you to share the "MRC Minute" with your colleagues and to educate them about what we do and the important role our dedicated volunteers play in the community.

The role of the MRC volunteer is now more important than ever. This spring, scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted a particularly severe hurricane season, with as many as three to five major (Category 3+) hurricanes affecting the United States. At the same time, governments and public health researchers continue to prepare for a possible influenza pandemic. We can prepare for threats that we know, but we should be prepared for any threat. This is where you, the MRC volunteer, come in.

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) has made great progress in expanding the MRC over the past year. We now have more than 100 volunteers in the MRCAlert system and have completed three orientation trainings. Our ranks include physician assistants, registered nurses, behavioral health specialists, physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and emergency medical technicians, to name a few. We hope to hold future trainings on a quarterly basis for existing volunteers on topics as varied as the Federal Government's National Incident Management System (NIMS) to Point of Dispensing (POD) operations. These trainings and other topics of interest will be covered in the "MRC Minute."

In order to most effectively prepare for and respond to disasters, we are hoping to continue to grow the MRC and envision a Corps of thousands. The City thanks you for your support and commitment to making our community healthier and stronger. Please encourage your colleagues to volunteer and contribute to our essential mission. They can learn more about the MRC and register online at <http://www.phila.gov/mrc>. In addition, if you have any news or information that you feel would be interesting to fellow volunteers, please submit content for the newsletter at any time to mrc@phila.gov. We look forward to your insights and feedback.

Warmest regards,
Marie Carbonetto, R.Ph., MRC Coordinator

Inside this issue:

April 2007 NIMS/ICS Training	2
Meet the MRC	2
Personal Preparedness	2
What's New at PDPH	3
Upcoming Training	3
Resources of Interest	3

Contact Information:
Marie Carbonetto, R.Ph.
MRC Coordinator
E: mrc@phila.gov
P: 215-685-6498
<http://www.phila.gov/mrc>

April 2007 NIMS/ICS Training

On April 26, 2007, twenty-two Philadelphia MRC members attended a training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Management System (ICS). Presenters included Ed Jasper, M.D. from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Tom Grace, Ph.D. from Emergency Management Innovations. The topics that were covered in this program are listed as National Medical Reserve Corps core competencies and are critical to a coordinated, unified response to natural disasters and other emergencies.

Visit FEMA's Website at
<http://training.fema.gov/>



Those volunteers who could not attend the April training have the opportunity to learn the same material by enrolling in online FEMA courses (IS-700 and ICS-100). For more information regarding the courses and to register, please visit the FEMA website at <http://training.fema.gov/>. In order to receive credit for taking these courses, please forward you Completion Certificates to mrc@phila.gov.

Meet the MRC: Michael O'Neill

As a Mental Health Counselor, EMT, and doctoral student of Clinical Psychology, it is surprising that Michael O'Neill would have a free moment to devote to the Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps. He explains, "My family has a long-standing tradition of public service. I consider it a privilege to serve my community." He first gained experience in disaster response as a former Army sergeant. In this role, he served as a reconnaissance scout and paratrooper, trained in nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare.

O'Neill's background does not only include military service, but volunteerism. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, O'Neill volunteered as an EMT attached to the Red Cross. He began his work in the Gulf Coast and continued on to a shelter in San Antonio, where he received the nickname of "Stickers" for his distribution of coloring books, crayons, and stickers to the children living there. His skills and experience are an asset to the city.



Michael O'Neill receiving an award for volunteer service from the Director of the Augusta, GA MRC.

Ready or Not: Personal Preparedness Tips

Fires, floods, blizzards, heat waves, a hazardous materials spill, a major power outage or even a terrorist attack. These are just some of the emergencies that you could face. Planning now and knowing what to do will make it easier for you and your family if an emergency occurs. As a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer, it is especially important that you have a personal preparedness plan. **Are you ready, or not?**



If you take the time to prepare for the first 72 hours of a disaster, you'll have taken the single most important step to assure your well being, and in some cases, your survival. Being prepared could mean the difference between becoming an MRC volunteer able help to others or a citizen in need of help.

Find out what you need to have in your **head**, in your **home** and in your **hand**. Get more information at <http://www.readyphiladelphia.org/> or by calling 1-877-READY-11.

What's New at PDPH: Continuing Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

A pandemic influenza outbreak could result in millions of deaths worldwide and cause massive disruption to our economy and society. For this reason, pandemic influenza preparedness and response is an ongoing priority of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Over the past year, a great deal of progress has been made in engaging stakeholders across the city, preparing detailed guidance materials, and exercising plans.

Stakeholder Engagement and Guidance: Concluding the first phase of an ambitious year-long project, this summer PDPH will release specific guidelines for hospitals and healthcare facilities on the topics of case management and infection control. To produce these recommendations (to be published on <http://www.phila.gov/ready>), PDPH regularly convened three working groups of stakeholders from 25 Philadelphia-based hospitals. PDPH plans to reach out to additional stakeholder groups such as universities and long-term care facilities to advise the development of guidance materials specific to these communities.

Exercising Plans: On June 28, 2007, PDPH, the School District of Philadelphia, and other key city agencies participated in a school closure tabletop exercise. The goal of this exercise was to practice responding to the immediate and long-term consequences of school closure in the event of an influenza pandemic.

Upcoming Training: Points of Dispensing (POD) Walk-Through Exercise

You learned about PODs in your orientation training, but what is it really like to staff one? What does a POD look like in action? To answer these and other questions, you should plan to attend a POD training on September 5, 2007 from 6—8:00 p.m. at the Carousel House Recreation Center, Belmont Avenue & North Concourse Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19131.

The training will offer a hands-on experience for volunteers who may be called upon to serve as POD staff in the event of an emergency. After attending the session you will have greater familiarity with the set-up and organization of the POD and will have an opportunity to practice screening members of the public and dispensing medications. Please RSVP to mrc@phila.gov, or online at <http://mrcaalert.phila.gov/>.

****Resources of Interest: MRC “Webinars”****

The National MRC website is hosting a series of live, interactive seminars to provide information on a wide variety of topics to MRC leaders and volunteers. These “Webinars,” which were first introduced in February 2007, will occur on a regular basis, every six to eight weeks.

MRC 101 kicked off the series and provided an introductory overview of the Medical Reserve Corps program. Future “Webinars” will be advertised at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Webinars> along with detailed topic and registration information.